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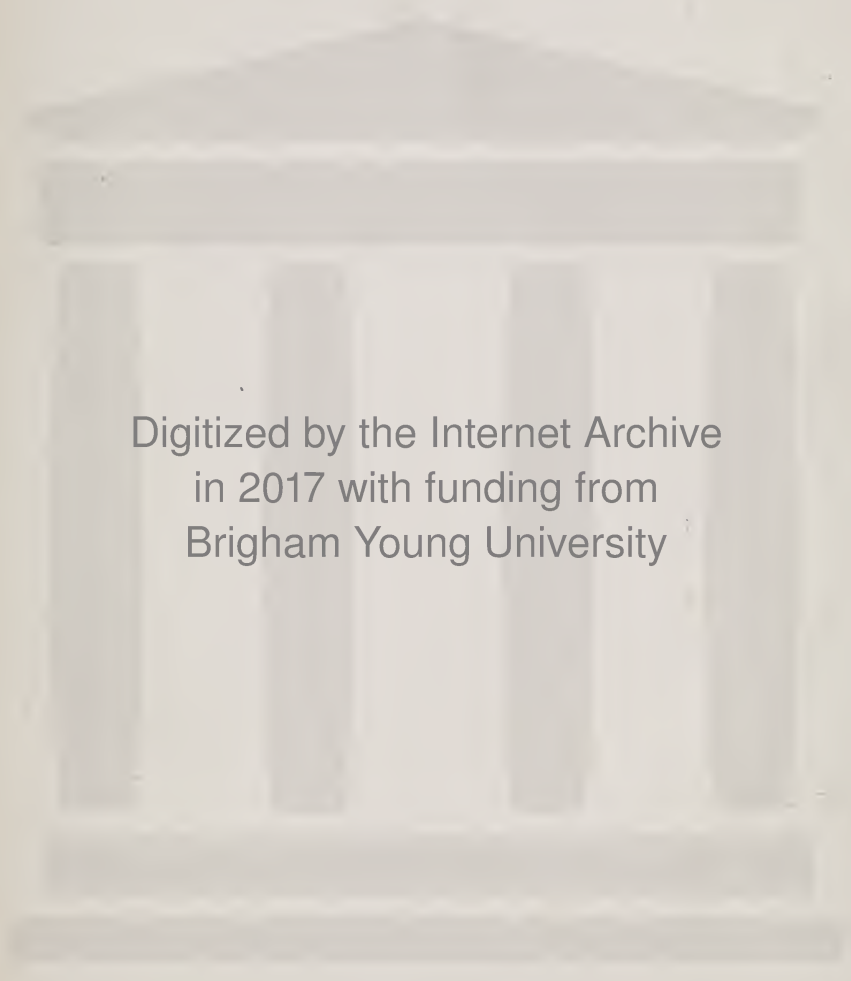
RETALIATION

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RETALIATION.

A SOUVENIR.

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

TO

F. W. Calais, late Lieut. 3d U. S. C. Cav.,

BY

PETER KARBERG.

"NORD IOWA POST," NEWS, BOOK & JOB PRINTING OFFICE.

1878.

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Published at
Lansing, Iowa

TO LIEUT. CALAIS:

Dear Friend and Comrade:

Many years have passed since with light hearts and flashing swords we dashed together over hills and valleys pursuing the enemy. All the many battles and skirmishes in which I participated have not left as vivid an impression upon my mind as the comparatively small expedition in which you figured as the hero, and which I now recall to memory, believing it will receive a position among the most startling episodes of the war.

While occupying active positions during the war, those scenes of blood and carnage did not appear to us anything extraordinary, but since we have again followed for years our peaceful vocations, our mind often wanders back to those terrible events and we wonder ourselves, how we could have acted coolly and deliberately on many occasions of great danger. "An HONEST man is the noblest work of God," not less so, the BRAVE, DASHING CAVALRY-SOLDIER! Often since I left the army, have I thought of and admired your qualities as a fearless trooper, and I therefore respectfully dedicate to you this little work, containing a strictly true episode, as you will perceive, of our experience in the field, giving names of the actors and of places as near as I can now remember them. I may say, that it will be read by you and other comrades, who are acquainted with the facts with pleasure and recall in the minds of other comrades of the army similar events of their army-life. If such should be the case the undersigned will be largely repaid for his labor.

Yours fraternally,

THE AUTHOR.

Lansing, Iowa, January 1878.

J. S. Williams, Lincoln, Neb., 2-11-1938

RETALIATION.

In the spring of '64, the command I belonged to, was ordered to guard a section of the Mississippi River and the plantations in one of the finest and most cotton producing parts of the State of Louisiana. The emancipation proclamation, and the inducements held out by our Government to Northern men to proceed South and cultivate the beautiful plantations, abandoned by their rebellious owners, had caused many to accept these propositions and lease the deserted farms, thus to replenish the cotton market with that much sought for and, at that time, fabulously valuable article; tilling and working the soil with the aid of the negroes, under the then called "Free Labor System." The speculation seemed a reasonable one, and with the protection of the troops, promising success.

The force sent for the protection of this district, consisted of two regiments of infantry, one battalion of cavalry and a battery of artillery, all colored troops and under the command of the gallant young Gen. A. Watson Webber, whose Adjutant I had the honor to be.

It is not my intention to relate the pecuniary success of some of our lessees, nor to give a history of the trials and difficulties the less fortunate encountered, nor to recount the constant raids from Guerillas they were subjected to, but to narrate our most formidable expedition, while in that vicinity, the incidents of which have left too vivid impression to ever be forgotten. As to the planters, suffice it to state that the larger portion of them were compelled to lead a life similar to that of our early settlers on the western frontier, that many nights they preferred the woods, as a safer place of abode, to their sleeping apartments, and that hardly a night passed without the appearance in camp of some dusky scion of African descent, apparently frightened

out of his boots, as his half dressed person would indicate, reporting that the Rebels were on the plantation, driving off the negroes and the cattle, and not seldom causing the dwelling-houses and negro-quarters to share the inevitable fate of the cotton-gins, that of being burned to ashes.

I have above stated that the country was infested by Guerillas — bands of lawless murderers and villains, belonging to neither party of the contending armies in particular, although their sympathies were naturally with the cause of treason. It is with these cut-throats and outlaws that our little army principally had to deal and it would have been a matter of insignificance, and required little time for our brave General to annihilate those rascals, had they dared to offer an opportunity, or show their readiness to fight. But their plans were not to give battle, even had the odds been largely in their favor, but simply to harass us, to pounce with their whole force, upon a small party, possibly an unarmed one, shoot or hang them, and leave the bodies of their victims, in a ghastly, mutilated condition, on the road, to tell the tale, and for us to bury. And this was not the fate that awaited the colored soldier and his officer only, if he unfortunately fell into their clutches, but of all those whose sentiments were with the North, not excluding the lessees, against whom they seemed to cherish a particular hatred. Mounted on the finest horses the country afforded, these villains, with impudence, could dash through the country and commit their outrages in the immediate vicinity of our encampment, well aware that our much inferior mounted cavalry (some were mounted on mules,) could not compete with the swiftness of their excellent steeds, and that, therefore, little danger existed of being overtaken by us.

To revenge our murdered comrades, therefore, we had to adopt a different method than coaxing them “to give fight,” and our only chance to punish their atrocities, remained in a similar mode of warfare to their own; to make rapid raids ourselves, and dash suddenly into their midst, taking them by surprise, and thus compelling them to fight or die a coward’s death. These expeditions, made by a comparatively small force, raiding far from camp

in the heart of a country not merely occupied by Guerillas, but by detachments of regular confederate troops, outnumbering our little parties by ten to one, were by no means without great danger, especially as the latter had no objections in the least to see a d—d nigger officer or soldier murdered in cold blood, nor any conscientious scruples, if a Guerilla was not at hand, to take a part in the performance of this tragedy, themselves.

Small scouting parties had been sent out heretofore by day and night, with little other success than to give protection to the planters, seldom gratified with a little skirmish with the enemy, for an opportunity of which both officers and men were equally anxious. Were we to forever let these scoundrels go unpunished? —Were we to remain silent and not avenge the blood that had been shed in the most villainous manner, by these accursed cut-throats? Were we simply to act the part of a funeral escort, or dig the graves and bury our unfortunate comrades? Is it to be wondered that, at the news of every new crime committed, we longed and almost prayed for an opportunity of revenge? Alas! our time was approaching. It required one more tragedy and “forbearance ceased to be a virtue.”

The most formidably organized band infesting our district, was one commanded by Capt. Lee, consisting of about two hundred well mounted, well equipped Guerillas, composed of deserters of both armies, and so immense had been the outrages committed by these desperadoes and their consequent reputation, that it had even come to the notice of the rebel General commanding the department, who thought it advisable to order them from the scenes of their atrocities, which he did, and which command they, strange to say, obeyed.

But the inhabitants west of the river among whom had been the abode of these robbers for some time and who counted in their ranks some of their own relatives and who had shared and been the recipients of the plunder and spoils gained by these raiders, openly and boldly identified themselves with the highwaymen, and as, on account of their loyalty to the Rebel Government, they were entitled to a force for their protection against

Yankee invasion, they united *en masse*, and two towns signed a petition to the rebel general commanding, requesting him to return Capt. Lee and his command as a guard, stating that they desired no other protection. The rebel chieftain, not wishing to disappoint the desires of this loyal community, granted their petition, and while yet receiving this intelligence from one of our spies, another scout arrived bringing the news of the arrival of the notorious guerilla captain, and his enthusiastic reception by the populace of the town of Floyd.

Thus informed of the re-appearance of our foe and sufficiently acquainted with his diabolical disposition, we expected he would, at the earliest opportunity, make sweeping raids on the surrounding plantations, not only to satisfy his bloodthirsty followers but to prove his gratitude to the people who had caused him to be reinstated by their almost unanimous approval of his former exploits, expressed in their petition to the rebel general.

Being thus warned, preparations were made accordingly, and all the vigilance and strategy for which our General was famous, adopted to foil an attack of the enemy. Every night detachments of cavalry and infantry were posted for miles round our camp, ambuscaded, awaiting the enemy, and ordered not to return until half an hour after sunrise, thus making a night surprise an impossibility. But all remained quiet for several days and our detachments returned with the report that no sign of the enemy could be found.—This unusual silence, however soon proved to be the dread calm that precedes the storm. Almost within sight of our picket line were the dwelling houses, negro-quarters and cotton-gins of an immense plantation, about two thousand acres of which were under cultivation by a northern firm; to guard their interests more completely this company had organized independent scouts, about twenty men, doing an outpost picket duty, to advise our forces of any signs of approaching danger.

On the — day of September, our detachment had just returned from another such night expedition, and while our cavalry were still engaged in unsaddling their jaded animals, an inde-

pendent scout dashed suddenly through the picket line to headquarters, reporting the appearance of our expected enemy, plundering and murdering on the plantation above alluded to.— Mounting our horses we galloped to the picket line, where we could see the dark columns of smoke arising from the dwelling houses of the plantation and where we met our cavalry charging towards the scene of disaster. Arrived at the plantation we found our expectations realized. Everywhere we met with the sights of the mutilated bodies of helpless negroes and the corpses of the scouts, who had mostly been at breakfast when surprised, some with throats cut from ear to ear after having been shot, others literally riddled with bullets. The cavalry immediately proceeded in pursuit of the enemy who had accomplished these atrocities in a shorter time almost than it takes to relate them, and who was now on his way home, carrying with him plunder, and negroes, and four white men, managers on the plantation. But our miserably mounted cavalry proved, as heretofore, insufficient to overtake the villains; about six miles from our camp the enemy had to ford a bayou and here we were in hopes to overtake him, as it would require some little time for him to cross his plunder, but when arriving at this crossing it was only to meet disappointment again, and to show their defiance, and, if possible, to increase our wrath, these devils left on either side of the road, the dead bodies stripped entirely of clothing. Still we pushed on until night was approaching, when we sadly returned to camp, burying on our way, the bodies of our unfortunate fellow-men.

Among the white prisoners which had been taken, a young lad of about seventeen years, Mr. Heenan Webster, a clerk on a steamboat, chartered by the Company which cultivated the plantation; had been carried off by the Guerillas, and, strange to say, his body could not be found among the other victims of our cruel enemies. Should we give them credit for yet having a spark of humanity left sufficient to save from a dreadful fate this boy? He was the only child of his parents, who had, upon the assurance of his friend Calais, a Lieutenant in our cavalry, that there was no danger, permitted him to accept the offer of our officer to fill the

position above named. I will not try to describe the uneasiness that the uncertain knowledge of the fate of his young friend caused the Lieutenant, who was one of the bravest and most daring officers in the command.

"Adjutant," he exclaimed in his grief, "if anything has happened to Heenan it will kill his parents, and I am their murderer." What could I say? I consoled him as best I could, and bid him hope and believe that even these bloodthirsty villains could not wish to soil their hands with the innocent blood of his young friend.

Having returned to camp I reported to the General the success of our chase, I should rather say the failure, and in spite of the immovable, stern features of my superior, I noticed a nervous flash of disappointment, darting from his black eyes; he had already made up his mind how to act, for I had hardly finished my report when he turned toward me and said:

"Give orders that no one pass the lines, and send for Major Chapin of the cavalry to report immediately. My patience is exhausted. I will punish these villains and their accomplices, terribly. They have compelled me to act—they want war to the knife. I must have revenge, not only to protect ourselves, but those who justly claim protection of the Government through me."

I hastened to dispatch my orderlies with the command just received, and returned to the General's quarters, anxious to learn his intentions more definitely. I knew that he was in terrible earnest, and would accomplish his designs in spite of the most overwhelming odds or dangers.

On entering his tent, he handed me a sheet of paper saying: "Please copy this several times, Adjutant, I desire that my proceedings in this case be kept strictly secret for the present, only those who will be instructed with the immediate execution of my orders will be acquainted with my operations, until they are accomplished."

Convinced that I held in my hand the explanation of what quite naturally excited my curiosity, I hurried to comply with

the General's request, and throwing myself into my camp-stool, eagerly perused the contents of the paper.

There it was explained in one word: "RETALIATION!"—A Proclamation to the Towns of Floyd and Pinhook: "They had been our enemies not only, and staked their fortunes with the fate of treason, but had cheered and encouraged the crimes of murderers and cut-throats, welcomed them in their midst, shared the illgotten gains steeped in the blood of innocent, loyal citizens of our country; they must now take the consequences, they could no longer live on bayou Mason; their country was devastated by order of General A. Watson Webber."

If I say that I was gratified, the peaceable reader may startle, but those who have witnessed the terrible crimes committed by these outlaws, or the friends of the unfortunate victims, may understand my feelings, convinced as I was, that retaliation was forced upon us and our last resort, that we were choosing between two evils the smaller one.

Major Chapin of the cavalry reported, and that I might learn the details of the expedition, I accompanied him to the General's quarters.

General Webber, a young gentleman, possessed a brilliant mind, and what might have appeared to strangers an assumption of arbitrary authority, was a conviction of correctness, arrived at by well weighed reasoning; he therefore asked no counsel, although never repelling a suggestion. Arrived at his quarters, he politely accosted my companion with:

"Ah! Major, good evening, please be seated;" and he immediately proceeded to make known the object of his desire to see this officer at so late an hour, saying: "How many men can you arm completely and mount well for a rapid and severe raid?"

"About one hundred," replied the Major.

"Very well, I shall send to Capt. P—— of the battery, and order him to mount and equip all the men he can spare, to report under an officer to you. My desire is that you take this force, which will be ready to-morrow evening at sun-set, and set out on the river-road, proceed directly to the town of Pinhook, crossing

bayou T— at the B— place, and bayou Mason at the residence of Mr. C—, burn the place, and also any suspicious dwellings you may pass on your way, thence turn towards Floyd which will share the same fate; recross both bayous below and encamp, if too late to return to the fort Sunday night, on this side of the bayou. No prisoners will be taken! I wish my orders to be kept a secret; advise only your officers of my intentions; rest and feed your cattle well, that they may be equal to the task. You must strike quick!”

These were the orders the Major received, and being a man of few words, when the General had finished he merely said: “Very well, sir, anything else?” and as this question was answered in the negative he arose and departed. I followed him, and calling him into my tent read to him the Proclamation.

“The best thing ever done, and you can bet your life I’ll carry it out,” he said, after I had finished. “I have thought of that often” he continued, “but then on the General rests all the responsibility, should it displease the Department Commander, or the authorities at Washington, and therefore I never ventured any suggestion.”

The Major was a brave man, and an efficient cavalry-officer, and well I knew that the orders he had just received would be carried out to the very letter.

After finishing my copies, I retired thinking of the fate that awaited those, who to-night rejoiced over their late triumph, until Morpheus kindly closed my eyes. The excitement of the day however, had left too vivid impressions on my mind, and I was soon enveloped in dreams, charging Guerillas, jumping fences and ditches, swimming bayous and climbing embankments with my noble sorrel, shooting and shouting, until our Quarter-master Phillips rushed into my tent, asking who in the d—l I was balooing at, and if our bad commissary whiskey had taken effect on my brain? I soon explained, dressed, and went out to breakfast, where I found the General awaiting my appearance.

Breakfast finished, I went to the Captain of the battery to acquaint him with the General’s orders, to mount and equip a

portion of his command, and returned to report that he could add to the Major's command, forty men more, thus increasing the force to about one hundred and forty men, all told. On my arrival at head-quarters I found Lieutenant Calais in conversation with the General, and soon learned the errand which had caused him to seek the interview with the commanding officer. He requested to be permitted to preceed the expedition in rebel disguise, that he might learn the fate of his young friend, and if possible liberate him, and as the General could readily sympathize with the grief of the young officer, he after warning him of the dangers of the projected undertaking and cautioning him to be very discreet, gave his consent, desiring the Lieutenant to report at head-quarters before setting out on his perilous journey.

It was a gloomy dismal day, and the sun was hid behind the clouds, the foreboders of a storm, thus threatening to possibly cause a postponement of the expedition, in making the roads too bad to travel. The day passed slowly—to me a tedious one, living in hopes and fears; not only with regard to the weather but to myself more especially. I was Adjutant Gen'l of the forces and my place was at head-quarters. I desired to accompany the expedition and still disliked to ask the General; I had become of late a regular bummer, always accompanying scouts, sometimes even without the direct sanction of my commandig officer and had thus somewhat neglected my office duties, leaving to the A. D. C. and my clerks, business which should have been conducted by me personally, but which they goodnaturedly accepted and finished, which kindness I gratefully appreciated, but never had an opportunity (?) to return. What should I do? go I must! should I join the command as though it was a matter of course, which required no previous understanding, that I must accompany the expedition! I concluded to wait and take my chances.

About an hour before the time appointed for the expedition to start, two cavalry soldiers rode up to head-quarters, a prisoner in their midst; I eyed the fellow suspiciously, not to say savagely which might have been pardoned considering the mood I was in; he was a regular hoosier, the personification of a genuine bush-

whacker, mounted on an old "critter," dressed in home-spun, a bundle tied with strings behind his dilapidated saddle,—bridle strings, the very looks of the fellow were sufficient to hang him even in a more civilized country than the United States, if such could be found.

"Where did you get the fellow, boys?" I asked the guard.

"Caught 'im out dar on de T—— place," was the response.

I was just going to ask them how they got outside the lines, after the strict orders that had been issued, when the General approached and headed me off with the very same question. The Rebel thinking that he might as well answer for himself, saluted the General in a somewhat awkward manner and said: "It is me Kunnel." All was explained. It was indeed Lieutenant Calais, what clothes, horse and saddle would not have disguised, the disappearance of his moustache had accomplished; he was transformed into the real type of a southern bred and born Louisianian even imitating to perfection, the slang and peculiar dialect of that class.

"But, good gracious, Calais," said I, "you don't intent to trust yourself on that old cow you so bravely straddle, although I confess, it corresponds with your whole appearance."

"Never mind, Adjutant," he replied, "it is not all gold that glitters, you know, so the converse may be true, for what you take to be an old cow is old Morgan, the fastest and toughest horse in the command, I'll risk myself with him."

He carried a Colt's revolver hid in his coat sleeve, as a last argument, should he be detected, and after a cordial shake of the hand, he started on his journey, accompanied by our heart-felt wishes for his safety and success. He was a desperate, reckless kind of a fellow, and his daring deeds in many a previous battle had won for him the love and admiration of his brother officers and soldiers alike.

Night was at last approaching and the time set for the expedition to start, found the General and myself in the cavalry camp, the former not only desiring to see them off, but to inspect them personally, to satisfy himself that nothing so far had been

neglected, which might cause a failure. Convinced that every thing was in good condition, he ordered the Major to start, which command was immediately executed by that officer giving in a loud voice the order:

“By fours right wheel march, forward!” and saluting the General he galloped to the front of his column, which now commenced to move toward the picket line, the officers as they passed saluting and some of them inquiringly looking at me, evidently not seeming to understand why I was not in line. The last file passed and turning his horse towards head-quarters the General said: “Come Adjutant;”—my last hopes vanished, but noticing the expression of my face the complete picture of disgust and disappointment, my superior with a smile added: ‘does the Adjutant want to go?’ In an instant my hand touched my cap in salute and casting a grateful glance towards the General, I dashed toward headquarters to fill my saddle-bags with provisions and as this required but little time, I soon passed through the picket line, on my way to join the command.

The clouds which had gathered in the morning were still threatening a storm, and promised, if not rain, a very dark night. I had rode in a brisk canter about two miles, when I entered the woods and was soon enveloped in such complete darkness, that I had to reign up my horse to proceed more slowly and carefully, but despite straining my eyes to their utmost capacity to penetrate the darkness, I soon discovered that I had left the road and was obstructed by such thick underbrush that my horse voluntarily stopped. Knowing that in proceeding I might lose the road entirely, I dismounted and leading my horse I advanced towards the direction, indicating an opening in the forest and where I naturally supposed to find the track; but stumbling and staggering over logs and underbrush, I soon concluded that I was on the wrong trail, and not to be separated from the road, which must be in my immediate vicinity, still further, I sat down on an old tree determined to coolly await, if necessary the dawn of day, and then by rapid march, make up for lost time and regain the command. Meditating and thinking over my difficulties, I

had been resting about an hour, occasionally glancing towards the sky, to see if I could not possibly discover a star which would kindly guide me "out of the wilderness", when I was suddenly startled by a loud peal of thunder, accompanied by a flash of lightning, showing every object distinctly for a second, and lo—within a few steps of me, my quick eye caught a glance of the lost road, which, mounting my horse, I regained in an instant. But now I stopped to consider well before proceeding, I had just escaped a night-lodging in the woods; two ways lay open, to venture on my way to find the command, or to return to camp; I had no confidence in myself to warrant any success in finding my way through the dismal woods, neither could I entertain for a moment the idea of giving up the expedition; to remain where I was, may be all night, was equally disagreeable. At last a bright thought struck me, I would return to camp and take my orderly who I remembered now, had advised me when I started, to take him along, as he thought that I would be unable to find my way in the dark. At the time I took this for an argument merely, which he advanced in his favor, to be permitted to accompany me. It was my only chance, and once more I turned toward headquarters, which I reached in a short time, learning to my astonishment, that I had been absent, fully three long hours. Not to awake the General, who had retired, I roused the orderly with the least possible noise but the trained ear of the soldier heard that something unusual was going on and he called to learn the cause of the disturbance; I answered him, stating that I had returned for the orderly, having lost my way in the darkness. He thought that I had better abandon the trip, but as I with the orderly (who was as anxious to go as myself), assured him, that with the latter there would be no trouble in finding the way, he reluctantly consented.

On our way again, and entering the woods, we found such terrible darkness, that I could not see the branches of the trees overhead nor distinguish the horse of my orderly, which was of a snowy white color, and to keep from being separated I had to call repeatedly, to judge from the sound of the answer, the

whereabouts of my companion. We had thus rode two or three miles, I—as the many turns in the road did not permit us to ride abreast—keeping as close behind my orderly as possible, when we were startled by the sudden challenge of a sentinel; we checked our horses and drawing our revolvers awaited “coming events”; but the “Who comes dar?” soon chased away all doubts as to friend or foe, and unhesitatingly and somewhat saucily my orderly answered, “It is the Adjutant.” Ordered to advance we did so, and sure enough, there was our command, bivouaced for the night; the awful darkness had compelled even them to await the approach of more light. After finding the officers and telling them of my difficulties, I wrapped up in my oilcloth and threw myself on the ground, to gain, if possible a few hours of sleep. Hardly had I closed my eyes when the bugle sounded to mount again, and looking up, I discovered an occasional star peeping through the swiftly flying clouds, although still very dark, it was sufficiently light to resume the march.

After riding in silence with the Major for some time, I spurred up my horse and cantered ahead to join the advance-guard, consisting of ten men and a Sergeant; they were picked men, mounted on the fleetest horses, and all eager for a fight.

“Come to see the fun, Adjutant?” asked the Sergeant, as I reigned my horse along side of his. “If you do, just stay with us; we’ll have the first chance, and as you’re good on the steeple-chase you’ll enjoy it.”

I told him I hoped it would not end in a wild goose chase again; but he “kind o’ thought we’d catch some o’ them fellers this time.” Looking at my horse he remarked with a grin:

“I see you hain’t got that fast feller; thought you’d better leave him at home to-day.”

“Yes, he is too much for me, Sergeant,” I replied, laughing at the hint. The horse he referred to, was one of the General’s. I had rode him once on a scout and while charging some Rebels he became utterly unmanageable, dashing like lightning past all, right towards the Rebels, who were massed in force at the outskirts of the woods, and compelling me, to avoid certain capture

and consequent death, to take my chances by jumping off. I did so, and to the astonishment of all, I did not only escape unhurt, but my nag, relieved of his rider, quietly stopped, suffered himself to be remounted and returned with me as fast as he had carried me off. I need scarcely add that I made a solemn vow never again to ride that reckless charger on a similar expedition, and that I conscientiously kept my promise.

Dawn was at last approaching, enabling us to distinguish objects more at a distance, we were still on a bush-road but would soon leave the forest to travel through a most beautiful farming country. Urging our horses to a faster pace, our attention was called to the neighing of a steed, answered immediately by our own horses. The sound came, apparently, from the interior of the woods not far distant, and taking two men, with their carbines at a 'ready', I rode in the direction indicated by the voice of the animal, to reconnoitre. We had not proceeded far when we found the object of our alarm, with pricked up ears and eyes wide open, intelligently looking at us, in company with its master, to all appearances a Rebel; but we soon recognized the fellow, and mounting his horse, Lieut. Calais rode towards us, saying:

"Halloo, Adjutant! The darkness was too much for me. I got this far and had to give it up, and would have slept, God knows how long, had not old Morgan challenged."

Having been detained, and it being impossible for him to gain much headway from us, I advised Calais to remain with us, assuming the character of a prisoner whenever we came near a plantation, thus being able to gain information about the Rebels more readily, and to question the citizens with regard to the fate of his young friend. He consented, and we now resumed our march in earnest; striking into a slow trot, we soon made up for lost time.

As we reached the open ground, the sun arose in all its splendor, casting its majestic rays over the beautiful scenery before us, smiling on the great father of the flowing waters, who was swiftly dashing towards his destination: the wide ocean; the dew-drops sparkled in magnificent colors in the warm sun-light, and

in the distance the bluffs of bayou Macon were visible, unveiled by the descending fog, slowly arising as if awakening from a long dream, gazing down upon the cotton-fields and the numerous swamps and bayous, inviting them to praise "Him who rules the universe and guides the destinies of men". Surrounded by this grand spectacle we rode on, bent on an expedition which would bring terror and destruction to our enemies. Our mission was "Death and Devastation"! Death to those who had driven us to the utmost by their terrible crimes; the firebrand to the homes of their kin, who had encouraged them in their fiendish acts and had been their accomplices. It was a terrible thought, as on this quiet Sunday morning we gazed toward the west, where in peaceful homes as yet, our enemies quietly slumbered, little expecting the fate which awaited them, nor thinking that we were on our way to revenge our murdered comrades, determined to repay them in their own coin.

Alas, they had brought it upon themselves, forced it upon us in self-defence! We dispelled these gloomy thoughts, and eagerly pushed to our destination to execute our orders, engaged in speculating as to a probable fight to which we might coax Capt. Lee and his command.

"I tell you, Adjutant, he won't fight", said Calais, interrupting the silence which had reigned in our little squad for some time. "If we burn their homes over their heads, they dare not try to prevent it. I have tried these villains and although they outnumbered me three to one, they would invariably take to their heels. Our only chance for a square fight remains with Colonel D——'s command, encamped about five miles from Pinhook. If they learn our intentions, they will come with their whole force to the rescue of the doomed towns, and then we may expect more fighting than we bargained for."

"But how", asked I, "are we to be revenged if the Guerillas will not fight?"

"They, most probably, are scattered over the country in squads, visiting here and there, as is their custom, and our only chance is to surprise them in their homes, or meet them on the

road, try to catch them, or, if this is out of our reach. send a well aimed bullet after them and thus prevent their escape.'

We were approaching a short curve in the road, behind which, hid from sight by the trees and underbrush, was the ford by which we were to cross bayou Mason, the surface of the water was almost on a level with the shore on this side of the road, while the opposite embankment led into the 'uplands' by a road cut through a small hill, forming a narrow passage, scarcely wide enough for two wagons to pass each other, and winding its way, slightly ascending, into the country.

We had just turned around the curve and were nearing the ford, when, to our amazement, we heard the laughing and joking voices of persons, apparently approaching the opposite side. We stopped, and had hardly formed into line to secure a chance for each man to fire his carbine, when three Guerillas turned the bend in the road and appeared in full view of us.

"Fire! Charge!" cried Calais; we buried the spurs into the flanks of our horses, and while yet the discharge of firearms was ringing in our ears, dashed toward the ford, through the water and charged up the road, passing the dead bodies of two robbers, in wild pursuit after the third one, who, as the bloody track indicated, was bleeding from a wound, but still hopeful of escape. Arrived on the main road, we saw him flying in head-long speed over the road, old Morgan and my sorel soon gained on him, however, and the steady hand of Calais send a ball from his revolver after our enemy, which, taking effect in one of the hind legs of the horse, stopped the fugitive, who, jumping off the wounded animal, threw up his hands to indicate that he was our prisoner.

"No quarter to-day!" cried Calais, in a terrible voice, as he discharged his revolver into the face of our victim, causing the latter to throw up his arms, and falling heavily on his face, he expired.

Was this murder? It could have been called so, had our victim been an honorable foe, and conformed to the laws of warfare. But we could no more consider the especial rights or wrongs of

any acts we now committed, we were compelled to perform them as a guarantee to our escape and future safety from the atrocities of these villains. Leaving the dead body we returned to proceed on the road leading to the town of Pinhook, which we had passed in our late chase.

With the eastern shore of bayou Mason we left the large cotton-plantations and were now traveling through a poorer and less valuable region of farming country, divided into small farms and occupied by an ignorant, I might say, depraved class of inhabitants; snuff dipping women, and rough, boasting men, mostly too poor to own slaves themselves, yet the most bitter enemies of this unfortunate race. It was this class which, to some extent, deserved to be called 'poor white trash', accepting the word 'trash' as merited, although their poverty had, I believe, given birth to this name among their wealthy neighbors. Uneducated and ignorant they became the ready tools of the aristocrats, and although it would have been impossible for them to point out any interests which were at stake in their case, to cause them to take up arms against our government, they were easily persuaded to join the Rebellion and to enlist in the army, or organize 'independent companies'.—These independent companies soon became a band of lawless marauders and deserved, and willingly accepted, the name of 'Guerilla bands'. The parish through which we were now travelling, had furnished two such bands, the one commanded by Capt. Lee, the other raiding below on the Mississippi river and as notorious for the outrages committed, as our own immediate enemy.

We had passed several farmhouses, which, as there was no occasion to enter, we left undisturbed, when we saw one in front of which a negro was standing, who, on perceiving us, joyfully lifted his old hat and approached us. When he came up to us, some of our men recognized him as one of the field-hands from the T— place, who had been carried off by the last raid, and who, as he stated, had been left at this house to serve the occupants in the capacity of a slave. Uncovering his head he showed us some horrible gashes from sabre cuts, and told us that

there was another negro in the barn, dying he supposed, who had been made a target of in the morning, while standing at the gate, by some passing Guerillas. Riding up to the house we entered, and found the inhabitants to be an old man, a young woman and three or four children. Looking arround we found a Henry rifle, one of the sixteen shooters, with which the scouts on the T— place had been armed; our suspicions aroused, we now commenced a regular search and soon discovered under the bed: carbines, pistols, saddles and harness, all of which were identified, as having come from the plantations in our vicinity, or from murdered soldiers and officers. Not a word had been said to the occupants of the dwelling, who had watched our proceedings in silence, well aware that to deny these prcofs would be absurd.—We concluded to halt for the Major and after posting a picket, sat down to await the arrival of the command.—Calais, who had been treated as our prisoner, approached the woman, and as I was looking out of the window, engaged in a confidential whisper with her. To give him a fair opportunity I went out and seated myself on the railing of the porch in front of the house. In a few moments Calais joined me, relating the information gained: "The husband of the young woman belonged to Capt. Lee's command and had left a short time before our arrival, proceeding to Pinhook. She knew nothing of the fate of Calais' young friend, but did not think that any white man had been taken across the bayou as captive. The column now arrived and we reported to the Major what we had heard and seen. He rode up to the house and calling the old man said:

"I give you five minutes to move from this house, then I shall burn it!"

I can not describe the scene that followed the announcement of the Major's decision, the appearance of the woman and her children, her pleading voice choked with tears, her hands wrung in despair, her children running hither and thither, crying and praying. I mounted my horse, called to the Sergeant to gather his men, and, accompanied by Calais, left the premises.—Casting a last glance towards the fatal farm, I saw thick, black clouds

emerging from the building. The work had been done—Retaliation.

The road lay straight before us for about half a mile, and we struck into a canter to gain our distance from the command, but soon we reached out at full gallop as we saw at a distance some Rebels, who, on perceiving us, turned and fled. There were six or seven and as we turned a corner in the road we came again in view of them, hearing them shout and urge on their horses. Thus dashing by the houses in hot pursuit, I noticed a man running behind a dwelling, saw him climb a fence and fly through a corn-field towards the woods; I turned my horse, and rode through the open gate and clearing the fence with a noble leap, pursued the fugitive; a few yards more and he would gain the woods, where he would likely escape; this I must prevent and discharging my revolver I was gratified to notice the fellow stagger, and leaning against the stump of an old tree, he awaited my approach. What was my astonishment when I recognized in the wounded man, an old acquaintance?

"Indeed, Lieutenant Powell, this is a remarkable coincidence," I cried. "I had certainly not expected to see you here!"

He was a tall, fine-looking fellow, but a sudden pallor overspread his well formed features, as he recognized me, and his eyes stared in terror at me for a moment. Well might he stare at me and fear the worst. He was a regular Confederate officer, and one of the most passionate and hot-headed Secessionists I had ever met. He had carried a flag of truce to our forces some time ago, when I had received him, and, according to custom, partaken of refreshments served from head-quarters, before our picket line, with him; but such deadly hatred did he cherish against us, that he could not refrain from acquainting me with his feelings, and from assuring me that although he was now the recipient of my hospitality, if it should ever be his pleasure to meet me on a scout, he should be most happy to see my throat cut, and that he did not intend to take prisoners, and never had so far. The tables were turned—he was in my power, and a terrible fate seemed to await him.

"I ask no quarters," he cried after the first excitement, which had naturally followed our mutual recognition, had passed away, "Shoot me and be done with!"

"Don't be in such a great hurry Lieutenant," I replied, "I'll give you time to say your prayers. I think you need it."

"No, no," he said, "I don't believe in these death-bed repentances, don't wait, I am ready to meet my fate, I do not fear death!"

"Lieutenant Powell, what my fate would have been had I fallen into your hands, your own lips have told me. You hate me, hate the cause I defend. You are in my power, but you are wounded and unarmed, and if I desired, I could not kill you under these circumstances, it seems cowardly to me," and turning my horse towards the farm-house I galloped back, telling the inhabitants to care for the wounded officer after the troops had passed.

My first intention when meeting my foe, had been to kill him and I would undoubtedly have done so, had he shown the white feather, but after the courage he displayed, it was impossible for me to shoot him, and as he did not belong to a Guerilla band, I thought myself justified in acting as I did.

Returned to the road, I pursued my way to join my companions. After a ride of about two miles I met one of the men halting on the road; I asked him as to the whereabouts of the rest of our squad, and was informed that, as the Guerrillas had separated and scattered in different directions, our men had followed their example, each choosing his man giving chase over fences and ditches, through swamps and woods.

What cavalry soldier does not remember the wild excitement of the chase? the joyful leaping of the heart, the tenfold strength one suddenly seems to feel, the consciousness of a power one experiences, which nothing seems capable of resisting.

One by one our men returned, their horses blowing and panting from exhaustion, their bodies covered with the white foam of perspiration. Each man related his success; some had caught the horses of the captured enemy and now changed

animals, to return their faithful steeds to be led by a portion of the command designated for such purposes. At last Calais arrived and we pushed on toward Pinhook about one mile distant. Arrived in sight of the little town, we charged, to, if possible, catch some Guerrillas, but not a soul was visible on the street, even the inhabitants sullenly remained in their dwellings. Pinhook was a village of about two hundred inhabitants, all frame and log houses. I knocked at a door for admittance, but was told by a woman, who opened the window, "that she had nothing to do with 'niggers' and that I could not enter her house unless I choose to force her door."

"Wait old lady, I thought, you will soon whistle a different tune!"

When the command arrived, we posted pickets on the different roads leading into the village, three out of every four were ordered to apply the torch, while the fourth held the horses, and in a few moments the clouds of smoke arose from the different points, slowly ascending towards heaven.

The deed was done! Mounting, the advance guard left the scene of disaster and wended its way toward the town of Floyd, only a few miles off, leaving the command to secure the complete execution of our orders.

Calais had found an old negro in town whom he had questioned about his friend, but no information was gained, the old darkey assuring him however, that no prisoners except negroes had crossed over the bayou at Floyd.

What could have become of the body of the unfortunate boy? who, we were now certain, had been murdered. It was a painful thought to be left in the dark as to his fate, a thought which crazed the brain of the Lieutenant and caused him to swear terrible vengeance to the murderers.

Our way led us through a small forest. Calais and I were riding a short distance in advance of the squad on a road somewhat descending as we emerged from the woods, and leading over a ditch by a bridge up hill, turning in a short curve around a fence; careless, engaged with our thoughts we slowly rode on when we

happened to look and, imagine our surprise, found ourselves acting as rearguard to a party of fifteen or twenty Guerrillas, who were riding scarcely twenty yards in front of us, and who, having perceived my uniform at this moment, gave a yell and dashed away without firing a shot, not, however, without leaving two of their number, who tumbled from their saddles to bite the dust.

In an instant our guards were beside us, pursuing the cut-throats in all directions. Calais and I kept the road, (several of our enemies being in front of us,) firing now and then with little success, however, as they were lying on their horses' necks, and dashing along like lightning. We chased them until we came in sight of Floyd, where, to our gratification, we saw the whole Guerrilla force drawn up in line, awaiting us.

We thought it prudent, however, to check our horses, and stopping, looked at the enemy, who to all appearances, had resolved to obstruct our entrance to the town. I dispatched one of our men, who had joined us, to the Major with the news that we met the Guerrillas massed in force.

"Ah! if you fellows will only give us a stand," cried Calais, "won't we pepper you?"

A splendid level ground lay before us, giving a beautiful chance for a charge, and impatiently we awaited the Major, who had no sooner arrived than he gave the command:

"Draw sabres! right into line—Charge!"

swinging his sabre over his head as he dashed in front of his little command towards the Guerrillas.

Ah! it was a glorious charge, but within five hundred yards of our enemies they turned their horses and fled, not even firing a shot. Through the town we swept after the cowards, but as night was approaching and we had little chance to overtake them, our command commenced to scatter and our object that of burning the town, not yet being accomplished, the bugle sounded the halt, and soon the flames of the burning town lit up the shameful retreat of the Guerrillas.

As I had been in this town frequently and was acquainted with several inhabitants, I rode towards the pickets to remain

there, as I naturally expected that some citizens would ask me to save their property, over which I had no control, as the Major was empowered with the execution of our orders, and which petition, even if I had the authority, I could not conscientiously have granted. I knew that they were the cause of the bloody crimes committed around our camps, and that scarcely three families could have been found among the three or four hundred inhabitants, who had not sanctioned the acts of the Guerrillas; those unfortunate ones, whoever they were, must, if innocent, now suffer with the guilty.

As Calais had said in the morning, "that the Guerrillas dared not interfere if we burned their houses over their heads," so it proved to be. Towards the West, at a respectable distance from the town, we saw them quietly watch our proceedings. Shame! shame, on those contemptible cowards. With their force of about two hundred they could, at least, have harrassed and detained us, if not have prevented, the execution of our orders. But they were too cowardly to risk their miserable lives even to save their own friends and kin, and defend their homes!

The light of the burning town converted the landscape around us into the brightness of day, and for miles the reflection from the sky danced and leaped in ghastly forms upon the trees of the forest through which we were now travelling, having turned toward camp to bivouac for the night, after a crossing of the bayous had been effected.

Sadly and silently Calais rode beside me, occupied with his thoughts; as yet he had gained no information about his friend and we were now on our way towards camp.

"I shall not return to camp in the morning," he said abruptly, after a pause.

"But what else can you do," I asked, "than wait to learn the fate of Henan, whose body, if on this side of the bayous, will be found in a day or two."

"I can return to Floyd in the morning and force some cut-throat to tell me where to look for the corpse!" he replied fiercely.

"Good gracious, Calais, don't entertain such mad thoughts

for a moment. Commit suicide at once, rather; you cannot suppose that you will escape their suspicion, having been seen, not only by citizens, but by the Guerrillas themselves, charging upon them like a madman; and to be suspicioned by them means certain death."

"It matters but little what becomes of me" he cried "after what has happened."

I plead, I begged of him not to carry out his insane resolutions, but all in vain; he remained firm, and was determined to go.

The idea seemed so absurd to me, that I almost feared reason had left my young friend. I could not let him return to his cruel enemies; as a last resort, I stated the case to the Major, who as his persuasions to abstain from this dangerous undertaking, proved as insufficient as my own pleadings, peremptorily ordered the Lieutenant to return to the camp with the command in the morning.

I was satisfied and more at ease now. He dare not disobey the orders of his commanding officer. Having arrived at our bivouac, I selected a tree, spread my blanket under it, and was soon sound asleep; but what was my astonishment to learn when I awoke, that, Calais despite the entreaties, and in disobedience of the orders of his superior officer, had left the command and was now probably among his deadly foes.

Sadly we returned to camp. True, our mission had been accomplished, but what was that to the loss of our noble friend?

We had killed probably twenty Guerrillas, burned their lodges and thus revenged our murdered comrades. But what was that compared to the valuable life of our brave and gallant officer?

Returned to camp, the Major made his report, and I related the details of our scout to my brother-staff-officers, who all joined in sincere anxiety as to the fate of Calais.

The drums were beating tattoo as an orderly rode up to headquarters, reporting that Lieutenant Calais had returned. Had we been ordered to join Sherman's grand march to the sea, where glory and fame would have been our reward, we could not have felt more grateful than we did at this unexpected news. Mount-

ing our horses the provost-marshal and myself soon arrived at the Lieutenants tent, who, upon our entrance, buried his face in his hands and wept like a strong man, in whose heart was a grief too terrible to be borne in silence. But soon, he looked up, and pushing back his black hair in a manner indicating dissatisfaction it seemed, at having betrayed his feelings in such a manner, he said in a hollow voice:

"I have found him!" and proceeded to recite his adventure, which I will relate as nearly as possible in his own words:

"When I laid down near you, Adjutant," he continued, "it was not with the intention to sleep, but to wait till all was quiet, then take my horse and return to accomplish my object. About midnight I arose and, leading my horse, I passed the pickets unobserved, slipping between two posts, I then mounted and rode slowly towards the field of our late operations. I arrived in Floyd before dawn, and seeing forms moving here and there among the still smoking ruins of the dwellings, to save what had not been destroyed by the conflagration, I went up to a man and asked him if he belonged to Lee's command, which question he answered in the negative, adding that the Guerrillas had all left, some moving their families, others had, he said, proceeded to Pinhook. I spoke to several other citizens, and, strange to say, none complained; I heard no hard words denouncing us, or our actions, they seemed well aware that they had brought their own misfortunes upon themselves and had now resolved to make the best of it. Finally I concluded to go to Pinhook, where I would be sure to see some one who could give the desired information, and for once I was correct. I had ridden about fifteen or twenty minutes when I saw a man on horseback approaching, and I soon recognized the Guerrilla. My time had come. He was a tall, ugly looking fellow, the personification of a cut-throat suspiciously eying me as we met. I must give him a plausible story, and gain his confidence if I succeeded, and this was no small task. I will not relate our exact conversation. I played Guerrilla, assuming to belong to the band on the river below and now on my way to see Capt. Lee, with a request to join us on a

large raid. This seemed reasonable, and as my companion told me that Lee would be up in an hour or two, I concluded to return with him toward Floyd. I now commenced to give him a description of the fun we fellows had on the river below, how we caught and murdered niggers and lessees, and were determined to exterminate the last of them. This had the desired effect, and, warming with the subject, he, in return, gave me a glowing account of their last raid.

"Did you bury the Yanks after you killed 'em?" I asked innocently.

"Bury 'em?" he said, with a sneer at the idea. "I reckon not; left 'em on the road for the niggers to do that, except a young chap."

"And what of him?" I cried in a manner which would certainly have betrayed my deep interest, had my companion been in the least suspicious.

"We dragged him off the road into the woods, that the buzzards could eat him."

"D—d you! the buzzards shall feed on you!" I cried, and with a yell, which still rings in my ears, he fell from his saddle, sent into eternity with a ball from my revolver. To make my word good, I dismounted, and lifting up the body of my dead enemy, dragged it into the high weeds, then took the saddle and bridle off his horse which I hid in a similar manner, and smoothing over the track and chasing off his horse, I mounted and galloped toward the place where we had buried the dead overseers.

It was life for life, boys. My story is soon told now. About a hundred yards from the road, I met the most ghastly sight I ever beheld. There were the remains of poor Heenan which I could recognize by his clothes only. I cut this lock of hair, and, shuddering, left for the fort.

I have revenged him! May God forgive me, if I have done wrong." Throwing himself on his cot, overcome by his feelings, our young officer had finished his story, and that we might not disturb his thoughts, we rose and silently departed.

And now, kind reader, before I close this truthful narrative, let me add, that the General made his official report, stating his reason for acting as he had, and that his conduct was not only approved by his department commanders, but by the authorities at Washington, and that from that day, we lived in peace, as did the lessees, never again to be disturbed by Lee and his Guerrillas, who left the scenes of their atrocities, which had caused grief and sorrow, not only to their enemies, but had brought a terrible revenge upon their own kin.



